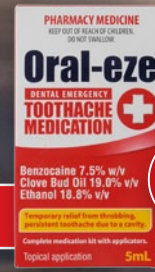


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Today's issue of PD

Pharmacy Daily today features four pages of news, plus full pages from:

- Pointrs
- Glucojel

Save with Pointrs

POINTRS is offering a free 30-day trial, giving pharmacists the opportunity to save big on their next holiday.

Using cash, airline and credit card loyalty points, members save up to 81% on flights - more details on [page five](#).

APP Black Fri sale

DISCOUNTED tickets to the Australian Pharmacy Professional Conference and Trade Exhibition (APP) will be up for grabs this week as part of a Black Friday flash sale.

APP will take place on the Gold Coast on 20-25 Mar 2025, bringing together up to 7,000 industry professionals, some just starting their careers and others decades in, all for networking and development.

The three-day program is now available, covering content across all areas of community pharmacy, from business, innovation and leadership, to product updates, harm minimisation, culture engagement and more.

To receive a notification to claim the Black Friday offer early, subscribe to the APP Conference newsletter [HERE](#).

Let's improve the standard

ADVANCED Pharmacy Australia (AdPhA) has released a new Pharmacy Standard to support patients from harm arising from transitions of care.

According to Katie Phillips, Chair of Standard of Practice Working Group, patients who have been offered safe transition care are less likely to be readmitted to hospital and enjoy better outcomes.

"Improving medication safety during transitions of care is everyone's responsibility, and requires commitment and collaboration across all levels of the acute and primary care sectors," Phillips noted.

"Pharmacy services specialising in transitions of care are perfectly placed to lead the way, and transitions of care stewardship is now more than just a pipedream.

"These Standards have been decades in the making and a

testament to all those who have pioneered in this space.

The new standard also highlights the important contributions of pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and assistants to ensure quality care for Australians moving between healthcare providers.

Medication-related adverse events occur in approximately 20% of patients after discharge, two-thirds of which are preventable, said AdPhA President Tom Simpson.

However, pharmacist-led interventions have been shown to lead to a significant decrease in hospital and emergency department visits.

"Pharmacy teams are integral to supporting transitions of care episodes, which often involve complex care arrangements," Simpson added.

"They facilitate continuity of care & [help] medicine management."

AMA tells Healthscope to "sort it out"

THE Australian Medical Association (AMA) has expressed "grave concern" over Healthscope's announcement that it will terminate contracts with Bupa and funds represented by AHSA ([PD 22 Nov](#)).

AMA President Dr Danielle McMullen said that unless all parties can come to an agreement before the contracts are terminated in Feb and Mar next year, some patients may face higher out-of-pocket costs for care in Healthscope hospitals.

"Last month, when initial

tensions emerged between Healthscope, Bupa and the AHSA, we warned of consequences for patients, who are merely innocent bystanders in these kinds of squabbles," Dr McMullen said.

The AMA has been in contact with all parties to "urge them to return to the negotiating table and sort out their disputes".

Dr McMullen said these kinds of disputes cause mass confusion for patients, who understandably start questioning whether they need to change health funds or seek care at a different hospital.

Glucojel Glucojoy

GLUCOJEL is running a major campaign for a \$10,000 giveaway, so stock your shelves well with the popular product to attract more customers in-store, and make sure your shelves are ready. Find out more on [page six](#).

Response mixed

THE Australian Pharmacy Council (APC) has welcomed an announcement from Health Minister Mark Butler that graduates of an AQF Level 9 Masters Degree (Extended) course in Pharmacy will be able to use the qualification title 'Doctor of Pharmacy'.

APC Chair Professor Sarah Roberts-Thomson welcomed the change, saying: "We are pleased that the anomaly that did not previously allow Masters (Extended) programs, to now be able to use a title that has been available to other health professions.

"APC will continue to accredit programs of study for registration as a pharmacist which meet the APC Accreditation Standards and Performance Outcomes 2020 to meet the needs of the Australian community."

However, the Australian Medical Association has weighed in with caution, expressing its concerns that the title may be confusing for Australian patients, particularly in light of pharmacists' expanding scope of practice.



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Preventing dementia

UNSW Sydney's Centre for Health Brain Ageing (CHeBA) has launched a new online study to address the role of social engagement in maintaining brain function and wellbeing to combat dementia.

"Evidence suggests that being socially active reduces risk of dementia by half," said social health expert and Clinical Psychologist Dr Suraj Samtani, who is the person leading the research.

"This is even after taking into account all other risk factors for dementia."

Dementia is the second leading cause of death in Australia and according to Dr Samtani, "loneliness is as bad for our health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day".

It is important to understand the difference between loneliness and social isolation.

Being socially isolated is the physical state of having less interactions with other people, while loneliness is the emotional state of feeling disconnected from the people around us craving more rewarding social connections.

A Harvard study on happiness found that social connection can delay the start of physical health conditions by 10 to 15 years and that close relationships and friendships are key to maintaining happiness and health.

Meanwhile, one in three Australians aged over 65 live in rural and remote areas, 35% of whom are lonely.

CHeBA is currently seeking people aged 55 and over who have memory concerns to join the study.

Massive \$1.2 billion bill gets heart pumping



A STUDY published today in the *Medical Journal of Australia* reports that Australia spends over \$1.2 billion per year treating people with high blood pressure.

Patients' out-of-pocket charges account for 40% of the bill, with the taxpayer footing the remaining 60% through government subsidies and industry contracts.

Over half the cost (\$611 million) was pharmacy fees for dispensing and handling medications, with GP appointments and purchasing medicines from manufacturers costing \$342m and \$221 respectively during the 2021/22 financial year.

"Two things struck us immediately: how much of the cost is going through pharmacy, and that patients are carrying an unfair share of the overall burden," said Professor Anthony Rodgers of the George Institute for Global Health, the lead author behind the study.

"While our concession system helps some consumers, these are real costs for people on lower

incomes" he said, noting that many are living with additional health problems and may have to "face difficult choices about what medicines or health appointments they can afford".

"This puts their health at risk and is a fundamental barrier to Australia achieving better blood pressure control and avoiding the serious and more costly health problems down the track," Professor Rodgers said.

The estimates predate the 60-day prescribing program introduced in 2023, but with low uptake thus far, it's likely patients aren't yet getting the full benefit.

"Our data highlights a need for further policy interventions to reduce patients' out-of-pocket expenses," Prof Rodgers said.

High blood pressure is still the leading risk factor for death in Australia, as it is a leading cause of heart attacks and stroke. It's estimated that 34% of Australians have high blood pressure, but due to a lack of

symptoms often go undetected.

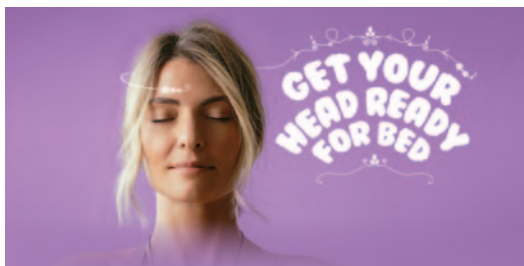
A lack of widespread screening was blamed as a major factors in under-diagnosis, however the condition is readily treated with medication and improvements to diet and lifestyle, and reducing the rate by 24% could save about 37,000 lives annually.



About one in three people manage to keep their blood pressure in a healthy range, much lower than in nations like Canada where it's around 66% of people.


Australia's National Hypertension Taskforce has a stated goal to improve control rates from 32% to 70% by 2030.

"As Australia struggles with a hypertension crisis, our analysis provides a real-world snapshot of the scale of spending on the problem, and who exactly is footing the bill, to help decision-makers develop more affordable, equitable and innovative pathways to get the problem under control," Prof Rodgers said.

Read the full study [HERE](#).





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*Seremind Consumer Medicine Information July 2019.

Global stroke and heart disease fall



INCIDENCE of stroke and ischemic heart disease are mostly declining around the world, a team of international researchers found. However, in East and West Sub-Saharan Africa, East and Central Asia and Oceania, ischemic heart disease is increasing, with the paper outlining key reasons why. The authors noted that potential socioeconomic development of some countries is affecting rates of cardiovascular disease and stroke, and that places experiencing rapid

economic transitions and rapidly changing lifestyle changes may also be seeing higher rates of disease. The increases of ischemic heart disease seen in those regions was attributed to several key factors: a diet high in trans-fatty acids and low in calcium, high BMI, household air pollution from solid fuels, non-exclusive breastfeeding, occupational ergonomic factors, vitamin A deficiency and occupational exposure to particulate matter, gases and fumes.

Published in *PLOS Public Health*, the analysis considered global data from 1990-2019 for incidence of ischemic heart disease and stroke and for exposure to 87 potential attributable factors.

The incidences and trends were reported at a global, national and regional level, and showed higher rates of heart disease than stroke.

Globally, ischemic heart disease reduced from 316 to 262 per 100,000 people and stroke declined from 181 to 151 per 100,000 over the three decades.

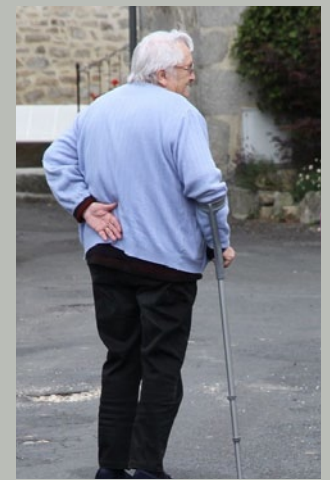
"This study profiles the significantly different incidence trends of ischemic heart disease and stroke across countries, identifies eight potential contributors to the disparities, and reveals the pivotal role of socioeconomic development in shaping the country-level associations of the risk factors with the incidences of the two cardiovascular diseases," the authors concluded.

CLICK HERE to read the full study.

Tech accepted

A **NEW** survey from the UTS Institute for Sustainable Futures has revealed that older Australians are happy to accept government-funded tech so they can be at home.

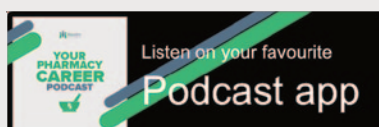
The results of the survey were released today at the NSW Smart Sensing Network's (NSSN) 3rd Ageing Forum at NSW Parliament House.



YOUR PHARMACY CAREER PODCAST

Dive into our latest podcast episode featuring **Jenny Kirschner** on Addressing Loneliness Through Pharmacy.

Jenny is the founder of PALS, the first international pharmacy initiative developing a road map for the pharmacy sector to address loneliness.



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Dispensary Corner

CAN you listen your way to good health?

That was the question posed by University of South Australia researchers investigating the potential benefits of health-related podcasts.

The short answer is, probably: podcasts *can* significantly improve health knowledge, increase exercise levels and boost healthy eating.

Based on results from 38 studies, the researchers found that people's engagement with health-related podcasts was generally high, suggesting that podcasts could be an effective medium for health information and behaviour change interventions.

The studies reported significant improvements in some aspects of human health, including in the areas of health monitoring, knowledge, behaviours, attitudes and chronic disease management.

However, in other areas, including physical activity, fruit and vegetable consumption and weight outcomes, the findings were mixed, with some studies finding improvements and others no change.

"Health and wellbeing podcasts have the unique ability to convey a wide range of health topics to a variety of listeners, but in a very accessible way," author Beth Robins said, adding that they're typically chatty and conversational, making them easy to listen to and understand.

So, next time you go for a jog or a walk in park, you could potentially double your money by listening to a podcast.

Aged Care Act welcomed



THE Older Persons Advocacy Network (OPAN) and Palliative Care Australia (PCA) welcomed the passage of the *Aged Care Act* through parliament last week.

The new *Aged Care Act 2024* aims to improve the way services are delivered to older people in their homes, community settings and residential aged care homes.

In contrast to the legislation it is replacing, the new Act puts older people who need aged care at the centre of the system, empowering them more to exercise their rights when accessing, or looking to access, government-funded aged care services.

OPAN Director, Policy and Systemic Advocacy, Samantha Edmonds, described it as "a historic moment, enshrining the rights of older people in legislation".

"This has been a long time coming, and we thank the Parliament for passing this important legislation before the end of the year," Edmonds said.

"We have long advocated for a rights-based Act which puts older people at the centre of the legislation, and we have achieved that," she added.

"We are pleased to see that there will be a positive duty on providers to understand and deliver services to older people in line with the

statement of rights."

However, Edmonds noted, there is more work to be done.

"Reform of this scale will take time to implement – and we need to ensure the rules uphold the rights of older people.

"OPAN will continue to work closely with the Government, our fellow peaks and aged care providers on the implementation of the Act, ensuring older people are engaged in the process."

Similarly, PCA noted that the Act is a "significant step forward in making sure palliative care is embedded within aged care", but says implementation will be key to its success.

"The *Aged Care Act* has been a critical step in delivering on the recommendations of the Aged Care Royal Commission," said Camilla Rowland, CEO of PCA.

"Now that the work is done, we need to focus on implementation – and making sure palliative care is part of the day-to-day work of aged care services."

Of the 185,000 people living in residential aged care, 92% would benefit from palliative care.

However, only 3% see a palliative care doctor in their first year following admission, and only one in three receive a GP assessment in that year. *KB*

RACGP guidelines

PREVENTATIVE healthcare guidelines for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were released last Fri, focusing on the health impacts of climate change, vaping, sleep and racism on Indigenous communities around Australia.

The guidelines are the fourth edition released by the Royal Australian College of GPs and National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

Culturally and clinically safe preventative care is important to the health and wellbeing of the First Nations community, noted Dr Karen Nicholls, Chair of RACGP Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health.

Reports have shown 64% of the "fatal burden of disease" for those under 75 are deaths that could have been avoided with the right care.

NACCHO CEO Pat Turner added: "This guide reflects the collective wisdom of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, ensuring culturally and clinically safe care".

By tackling emerging challenges such as climate change, vaping, and racism, we are not only addressing immediate health concerns but also laying the foundation for a healthier future.

"NACCHO is proud to partner with RACGP in delivering this indispensable resource to support GPs and healthcare workers nationwide in providing the highest standard of preventive care for our people," Turner continued.

Importantly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people led development of the guide.

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MORE

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